

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A silicon nitride wear resistant member ~~composed~~ comprised of a ceramic sintered body ~~containing~~ comprising 55 to 75 mass% of silicon nitride, 12 to 28 mass% of silicon carbide, 3 to 15 mass% of at least one element selected from the group consisting of Mo, W, Ta, and Nb in terms of silicide thereof, and 5 to 15 mass% of grain boundary phase ~~composed~~ comprised of a rare earth element-Si-Al-O-N, wherein the wear resistant member ~~having~~ has an electrical resistance of 10^7 to 10^4 $\Omega\cdot\text{cm}$, a porosity of 1% or less, and a three point bending strength of 900 MPa or more.

Claim 2 (Currently Amended): [[A]] The silicon nitride wear resistant member according to Claim 1, wherein the wear resistant member has a fracture toughness of 6.0 $\text{MPa}\cdot\text{m}^{1/2}$ or more.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): [[A]] The silicon nitride type wear resistant member according to Claim 1, wherein the wear resistant member further ~~contains~~ comprises 5 mass% or less of at least one element selected from the group consisting of Ti, Hf, and Zr in terms of the oxide thereof.

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): [[A]] The silicon nitride wear resistant member according to Claim 1, ~~one of Claims 1 to 3~~, wherein a rolling life life, defined as a rotation number of steel balls rolling along a circular track formed on the wear resistant member formed of the silicon nitride sintered body until a surface of the silicon nitride wear resistant member peels off, is 1×10^7 or more, when

wherein the rolling life is measured in such a manner that by setting a circular track having a diameter of 40 mm is set on the upper surface of the plate-shaped wear resistant member,

providing the three rolling steel balls each having a diameter of 9.525 mm and composed comprised of SUJ2 are provided on the circular track, thereby to form forming a thrust type bearing testing machine, and

rotating the rolling steel balls are rotated on the track at a rotation speed of 1200 rpm under a condition of being applied with while applying a load of 3.92 KN.

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): [[A]] The silicon nitride wear resistant member according to Claim 1, ~~any one of Claims 1 to 3~~, wherein the silicon nitride sintered body has a crush strength of 200 MPa or more, and a rolling fatigue life life, defined as a time until a surface of rolling balls composed comprised of the silicon nitride wear resistant member rolling along a circular track on a steel plate peels off, is 400 hours or more, when

wherein the rolling fatigue life is measured in such a manner that by forming three rolling balls each having a diameter of 9.525 mm are formed from the silicon nitride wear resistant member,

providing the three rolling balls are provided on the circular track having a diameter of 40 mm set on the upper surface of a steel plate formed of SUJ2, thereby to form forming a thrust type bearing testing machine, and

rotating the rolling ball are rotated at a rotation speed of 1200 rpm on the track under a condition of being applied with while applying a load so as to impact a maximum contact stress of 5.9 GPa to the balls.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): [[A]] The method of manufacturing a wear resistance member composed comprised of a silicon nitride sintered body, the method comprising: comprising the steps of:

preparing a material mixture by adding

12 to 28 mass% of silicon nitride,

3 to 15 mass% of at least one compound selected from the group consisting of the carbides, the silicides, and the oxides of Mo, W, Ta, and Nb in terms of the silicide thereof,

2 to 10 mass% of a rare earth element in terms of the oxide thereof,

2 to 10 mass% of aluminum in terms of the oxide thereof, and

5 mass% or less of at least one element selected from the group consisting of Ti, Hf, and Zr in terms of oxide thereof

to silicon nitride powder comprising containing 1.7 mass% or less of oxygen and 90 mass% or more of α phase type silicon nitride, and having an average grain size of 0.1 μm or less;

molding the material mixture to form a compact;

degreasing the compact; and

sintering the compact in a non-oxidizing atmosphere at a temperature of 1850°C or lower.

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): [[A]] The method of manufacturing a silicon nitride wear resistant member according to Claim 6, wherein the method further comprises:
~~comprising a step of~~

conducting a hot isostatic pressing treatment (HIP) in a non-oxidizing atmosphere of 30 MPa or more at a temperature of 1800°C or lower after said sintering, ~~completion of the sintering step~~.